The Necessity of Adhering to the Sunnah and Forbidding Defying It

From The Book: **"The Hadith Is Proof In Itself In Belief And Laws"** Chapter 1
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Early generations of Muslims are unanimous in that the Sunnah of the Prophet is the second and last source for Islamic Jurisprudence in all matters of life, belief, the unseen, Laws and Commandments, politics and education. They also unanimously prohibit shunning the Sunnah in any of the matters mentioned above, or preferring opinions, Ijtihad (trying o-ne's best to reach a Fatwa concerning a matter that has no clear rule in religion) or Qiyas (to establish a rule concerning a new matter by comparing it to a similar matter that has a rule in religion) to the Sunnah.

Imam Ash-Shafi'i said in his book Ar-Risalah: "Qiyas is not permitted when a Khabar (Hadith) exists." Similar to this saying is what some scholars say: *"If Athar (Hadith) exists, Qiyas is abandoned,"* and, *"There is no Ijtihad where the Nass (text of the Quran or Hadith) exists."* Their proof to these sayings are found in the Quran and the Sunnah.

The Quran Orders Muslims to Revert to the Sunnah

The Quran provides many Ayat that order Muslims to refer to the Sunnah for judgment, some of them are mentioned here as a reminder, **And remind (by preaching revelation, O Mohammad) for verily, the reminding profits the believers.** [51:55].

1 -- **It is not for a believer, man or woman, when Allah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have an option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a plain error.** [33:36].

2 -- **O you who believe! Do not forward (& speech or objection) in the presence of 'Allah and His Messenger (the Quran & Sunnah), and fear Allah. Verily, Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing.** [49:1].

3-- **Say (O Mohammad): "Obey Allah and the Messenger (Mohammad)." But if they turn away, then Allah does not like the disbelievers.** [3:32].

4 -- **And We have sent you (O Mohammad) as a Messenger to mankind, and Allah is sufficient as a Witness. He who obeys the Messenger, has indeed obeyed Allah, but he who turns away, then We have not sent you (O Mohammad) as a watcher over them.** [4:79-80].

5 — **O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger (Mohammad), and those of you (Muslims) who are in authority. (And) if you differ in anything amongst yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you believe in Allah and the Last Day. This is better and more suitable for final determination** [4:59].

6 -- **And obey Allah and His Messenger, and do not dispute (with one another) lest you lose courage and your strength depart, and be patient. Surely, Allah is with those who are patient** [8:46].

7 — **And obey Allah and the Messenger, and beware (of sins) and be afraid of Allah. Then if you turn away, you should know that it is Our Messenger's duty to convey (the Message) in the clearest way.** [5:92].

8 -- **Make not the calling of the Messenger among you as your calling of one another. Allah knows of you who slip away under shelter (of some excuse without taking permission to leave, from the Messenger). And let those who oppose the Messenger's commandment (Sunnah, orders, statements, etc.) beware, lest some Fitnah (trials, calamities, disbelief, etc.) befall them or a painful torment be inflicted on them.** [24:63].

9 -- **O you who believe! Answer Allah (by obeying Him) and (His) Messenger when he calls you to that which will give you life, and know that Allah comes in between a person and his heart (i.e. He prevents an evil person to decide anything). And verily to Him you shall (all) be gathered.** [8:24].

10 -- **And whosoever obeys Allah and His Messenger will be admitted to Gardens under which rivers flow (in Paradise), to abide therein, and that will be the great success. And whosoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger, and transgress His Limits, He will cast him into the Fire, to abide therein; and he shall have a disgraceful torment.** [4:13-14].

11 -- **Have you not seen those (hypocrites) who claim that they believe in that which has been sent down to you, and that which was sent down before you, and they wish to go for judgment (in their disputes) to the Taghut (false hopes in (the Meeting with) Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah much.** [33:21],

15 — **By the Star when it goes down (or vanishes). Your companion (Mohammad) has neither gone astray nor erred. Nor does he speak of (his own) desire. It is only an Inspiration that is inspired.** [53:1-4].

16 — **And We have also sent down unto you the Reminder and the Advice, that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them, and that they may give thought** [16:44].

Hadiths that Call upon Muslims to Obey the Prophet in All Matters

As for the Sunnah, it contains numerous evidences, that clearly attest the obligation of following the Messenger in all matters of religion. The following are some of them:

1 — Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah said, what translated means: *"All of my Ummah (nation) will enter Paradise, except whoever refuses (to enter Paradise)." They said: "And who will refuse?" He said: "Whoever obeys me will enter Paradise, and whoever disobeys me will have refused."* [Al-Bukhari].

2 — Jabir ibn Abdillah said: *"Angles came to the Prophet while he was sleeping. Some of them said: lHe is asleep.'* Others said: *'The eye is asleep, but the heart is awake.'* They said: *'There is an example to this friend of yours, therefore say your example.'* Some of them said: *'He is asleep.'* And others said:*' The eye is asleep, but the heart is awake.'* They said: *'His example is like the example of a man who built a house, threw a feast and sent a caller (inviting to the feast). Whoever accepts the invitation, will enter the house and will eat from the feast Whoever does not accept the invitation, will not enter the house and will not eat from the feast'* They said: *'Clarify it (this example) so that he understands it'* Some of them said: *'He is asleep.'* And others said: *' The eye is asleep, but the heart is awake.'* They said: *'The house is Paradise and the caller is Mohammad, Whoever obeys Mohammad, obeys Allah. Whoever disobeys Mohammad, disobeys Allah. Mohammad divides between people (between those who believe and obey him and those who disbelieve and disobey him).'"* [Al-Bukhari].

3 -- Abu Moosa narrated that the Prophet said, what translated means: "The example of me and what Allah has sent me with, is like the example of a man who came to a people, saying: *'O my people! I saw the army (of the enemy) with my own eyes. I am the naked warner (the habit of Arabs before Islam was that when one wants to warn his people of an invading army, he does so while naked to be more dramatic). Therefore, escape escape.'* Some of his people obeyed him and left at night, traveling at ease, and they were safe. Others disbelieved and in the morning they were still in their places. The army attacked them in the morning, destroyed and overwhelmed them. This is the example of whoever obeys me and follows what I was sent with, and the example of whoever disobeys me and disbelieves in what I was sent with of truth" [Al-Bukhari & Muslim].

4 -- Abu Rafi' said that the Messenger of Allah said, what translated means: *"Let me not find any of you, and while resting on his couch, that if an order of mine is mentioned in front of him, either a command of mine or a prohibition, he says: 'I do not know! Whatever we find in the Book of Allah (the Quran) we follow (otherwise we do not!).'"* [Ahmad, Abu Dawood, At-Tirmithi, ibn Majah, At-Tahawi & others].

5 -- Al-Miqdam narrated that the Messenger of Allah said, what translated means: *"Verily! I was given the Quran and its equal with it (the Sunnah). There may be a man, his stomach is full and he is (laying) on his couch, and saying: 'Hold fast to this Quran. Whatever you find of 'permissible matters, take it as permissible, and whatever you find in it of prohibitions, consider it prohibited,' However, whatever the Messenger of Allah renders impermissible is equal to what Allah renders impermissible. Verily, (the meat of) domestic donkeys is impermissible, also all carnivores which have fangs, also all what one finds that belongs to a Mu 'aahid (people of the Scripture who live under Muslim rule) unless its owner gives it away. And whoever stays with a people (as a guest), then they must be generous to him, if they do not, then he can take from them what he needs (of sustenance)."* [Abu Dawood, At-Tirmithi, Al-Hakim & Ahmad].

6 -- Abu Hurairah narrated that the Messenger of Allah said, what translated means: *"I have left with you two things, that (if you hold fast to them) you will never be misled after them (as long as you hold fast to them): The Book of Allah and my Sunnah. They will not separate from each other till they meet me on the Hawdh (the pool of Paradise river water that flows outside the gates of Paradise on the Hereafter)."* [Malik & Al-Hakim].

The Meaning of the Above Evidences

The above Ayat and Hadiths have benefits of very crucial importance, mentioned as follows:

1 -- There is no difference between Allah's Decrees and the decrees of the Messenger. Believers are not given any choice to disobey them. Disobedience of the Prophet is the same as disobeying Allah, both are utter misguidance.

2 -- No one has the right to introduce his preference between the hands of the Prophet (after his Sunnah has been decreed or mentioned), exactly as no one has any preference between Allah's Hands (after His order has been decreed). It is impermissible to defy the Sunnah of the Messenger. IbnAl- Qayyim said in his book Flam Al-Muwaqqi'in: "This means the following: Do not say until he (the Messenger) says, do not order until he orders, do not issue a Fatwa (legislative opinion) until he says his Fatwa, and do not decide in any matter until he issues his decision concerning it and until his order is established."

3 -- Whoever obeys the Messenger obeys Allah, the Praised one.

4 -- To shun the obedience of the Messenger is a Kufr.

5 -- The necessity of referring to Allah and His Messenger when divisions and differences arise in matters of religion. Ibn Al-Qayyim said: "The Praised one decreed that He and His Messenger must be obeyed. He repeated the order (saying [4:59]: 'And obey the Messenger') informing us that his (the Messenger's) obedience must be established without comparing his order with the Quran. If he decrees a matter, then his decree must be adhered to without hesitation, whether his decree can be found in the Quran or not. He was given the Quran "and its equal with it." Allah did not command that one must obey people of authority as an independent authority (saying: "And obey Muslim rulers, scholars"). Rather, He included their obedience in the obedience of the Messenger." [I'lam Al-Muwaqqi'in]. It is well-known to the scholars that referring to Allah means referring to His Book, and that referring to the Messenger means referring to him during his lifetime, and to his Sunnah after his death. They consider this a condition of Iman.

6 -- In the sight of the Shari'ah (Islamic Law), accepting divisions, by not referring to the Sunnah to end this division, is a major cause for the failure of Muslims in all their matters and the cause for their losing their strength and effectiveness.

7 -- Warning against disobeying the Messenger because of what this disobedience leads to of an evil end in this life and in the Hereafter.

8 -- Those who defy the order of the Messenger deserve to fall in calamities in this life, and face the painful torment in the Hereafter.

9 -- The necessity of accepting the Message of the Messenger and his decrees. This acceptance is the cause for the good life and happiness in this life and in the Life After.

10 -- Obeying the Prophet leads to entering Paradise and reaching the ultimate success. Disobeying the Prophet and ignoring his commandments is cause for entering Hellfire and facing humiliating torment.

11 -- one of the characteristic of the hypocrites, who show Islam and conceal Kufr, is that if they are called to refer to the Messenger and his Sunnah as a judge, they refuse and hinder from this path.

12 -- Mu'mins (believers) are different from the hypocrites. If they are called to the Messenger to judge between them, they hurry to this path with full acceptance, as if saying: "We hear and we obey." Therefore, they are the successful ones and the ultimate winners of Paradise for following this path.

13 -- Whatever the Prophet has ordered us, must be followed and obeyed, and we must shun all that he has prohibited us from doing.

14 -- The Messenger is our example and leader in all matters of religion, that is if we seek the pleasure of Allah and the best of the Hereafter.

15 -- All the Prophet has uttered, in matters of religion or the unseen, that cannot be comprehended with our limited minds or proved with experimentation, are a revelation from Allah to him. Misguidance can never touch this revelation.

16 -- The Sunnah of the Messenger clarifies whatever is revealed in the Quran.

17 -- The Quran cannot be a substitute for the Sunnah. on the contrary, the Sunnah is equal to the Quran in terms of the necessity of adherence and implementation. Whoever substitutes the Quran for the Sunnah defies and disobeys the Messenger, consequently committing disobedience of the Ayat mentioned above.

18 -- Whatever the Prophet has prohibited is equal to whatever Allah has prohibited. All decrees of the Messenger, that cannot be found in the Quran, are considered as if they were in the Quran. The Messenger said, what translated means:

"Verily! I was given the Quran and its equal with it" [Abu Dawood, At-Tirmithi, Al-Hakim & Ahmad].

19 -- Immunity from error and misguidance is only attained through adherence to both the Quran and the Sunnah. This rule is valid till the Day of Judgment. Therefore, it is impermissible to differentiate between the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of His Prophet.

The above evidences from the Quran and the Sunnah clearly attest that adhering to the Sunnah, and all what the Prophet has decreed, is absolutely necessary. Whoever refuses to refer to the Sunnah for judgment and does not accept whatever the Sunnah decrees, is not a believer. I would also like to point out that there are two important matters that these evidences clarify:

First: These evidences provide general guidance to whoever hears about this religion, till the Day of Judgment. This is clearly stated in the Ayah: **that I may warn therewith you and whosoever it may reach.** [6:19] and, **And We have not sent you (O Mohammad) except as a giver of glad tidings and a warner to mankind.** [34:28].

This was further explained by the Prophet himself in the Hadith: *"And Prophets were only sent to their own people. However, I was sent to all mankind."* [Al-Bukhari & Muslim], and, *"By Whom my soul is in His Hand, no man of this nation hears of me, also no Jew or Christian, and then does not believe in me, but will be of the people of Hell"* [Muslim, ibn Mandah & others].

Second: This rule (that the Sunnah must always be obeyed) includes all matters of religion, let it be matters of belief, Laws, etc. Every companion was obligated to believe in all of this (matters of belief and Laws) whenever he heard a decree of the Prophet, or was informed about it by another companion. It was not permissible for any companion to reject the Hadith of the Prophet if it was an Ahad Hadith by another companion, even in matters of 'Aqidah (belief). Likewise, whoever comes after the companions, has no right to reject the Hadith using the same excuse (that it is an Ahad Hadith), as long as whoever is narrating the Hadith is truthful himself. This must be the case till Allah inherits the earth and all that is on it. This was the case during the time of the Tabi'in (the second generation of Islam) and the Mujtahid Imams (who perform Ijtihad which is trying one's best to reach a decision concerning a matter of religion, depending on the Quran and the Sunnah), as we will narrate of Imam Ash-Shaffi later on in this book.

Al-Khalaf (Later Generations) Judged the Sunnah Instead of Judging With the Sunnah

After the righteous generations, came generations that ignored the Sunnah of the Prophet and lost their grip on it. This happened because the later generations adopted rules and basics that some people of Al-Kalam (philosophers), and some scholars of Fiqh and Usul (those who establish general rules comprised of numerous minor rules) adopted. As a result of these adopted rules, the Sunnah, or at least a major part of it, was ignored and doubted. A part of the Sunnah was even rejected because this part was in opposition to the general rules that Al-Khalaf established!! The Ayah was changed: Instead of referring to the Sunnah for judgment, they did the opposite. They referred the Sunnah to their own rules and regulations for judgment!! Whenever their rules agreed, they accepted the Sunnah Otherwise, the Sunnah was rejected!! As a result, the strong ties between Muslims, from among Al-Khalaf, and the Sunnah, were severed. Muslims of Al-Khalaf have become ignorant in the Messenger, his belief, Seerah (life story), worship, fast, prayer, Hajj, Laws and his legislative decrees. If these people are asked about any of the above, their answer will be issued based on weaker even fabricated Hadiths!! Or they may answer with a Mathhab (a school of though and a way of understanding the religion according to a certain scholar). If their answer is in opposition to a correct Hadith, and if they are reminded with this fact, they do not change their decision. Nor do they accept to adhere to the truth because of some doubts that they raise, or because of their rules and regulations. We will mention some of these rules later on in this book, God willing.

This disease, that we explained above, has become widespread in the Muslim world today. It even touched the majority of religious magazines and books. Very few refer to the Quran and the Sunnah when issuing Fatwas. The majority depend on one of the four Mathaheb (schools of thought of Abu Hanifah, Malik, Ash-Shafi'i & Ahmad). Occasionally, they refer to other than these four Mathaheb for Fatwa, but only for certain interest of the Muslim nation, so they claim. To these people, the Sunnah has become a forgotten matter, unless this certain interest requires referring to the Sunnah!!

An example of this is the attitude of some of these people concerning the Hadith by ibn Abbas that, at the time of the Prophet, if one divorces his wife three times in the same time, that it was considered one divorce only. These people considered this Hadith as a long ignored Mathhab!! Later, they adopted it (because of Masla'ha [certain necessity of the Muslim nation] and not because it was the Sunnah!), but after they were fighting against it and against who calls to it!!

The Sunnah has Become a Stranger to Al-Khalaf

What proves that the Sunnah has become a stranger in this later generation is the following. one famous Islamic magazine was asked if Allah gathers animals on the Day of Judgment. Their answer was: "Imam Al-Alosi said, in his transliteration of the Quran: 'There is no Nass (text) from the Book or the Sunnah concerning this matter that we can use to confirm that other than mankind and Jinn, of animals and carnivores, will be gathered (on the Day of Judgment).'"

This was the answer to the above question! This answer is amazing, and self-evident to how people of knowledge, let alone the ignorant, ignore knowledge of the Sunnah. There are many correct Hadiths concerning this matter. They all attest that animals and carnivores will be gathered and will be judged against each other. one of these Hadiths is. *"You (people) will give back each his dutiful right (on the Day of Judgment). Even the sheep that does not have a horn will be able to revenge (harm done to it by) the sheep that has a horn!"* [Muslim]. (Then all animals will be made dust). As ibn Amr said, this is when the Kafir says, as mentioned in the Quran: **"Woe to me! Would that I were dust.** [78:40]

Rules of Al-Khalaf That They Substituted for the Sunnah

What are these rules and regulations that Al-Khalaf introduced and substituted for the Sunnah? To answer this question, we say that these rules can be summarized by the following:

First: Some scholars of Al-Kalam said that Hadith Al-Ahad is not valid in matters of'Aqeedah (matters of belief and the unseen)!! As a consequence, some Du'at (those who propagate Islam) of today repeated this rule, saying that matters of 'Aqeedah (belief) cannot, and even said that it is Haram (impermissible) to, be taken from Ahad Hadiths!!

Second: There are some Mathaheb that established some rules concerning the above matter (of Hadith Al-Ahad):
a -- They preferred Qiyas (to establish a Fatwa concerning a new matter by comparing this matter to a similar one that has a ruling in Islam) to the Ahad Hadith! [Al I'lam & Shar'h Al-Manar].
b -- Ahad Hadith is rejected if it is in opposition to (their own) established rules and regulations!! [Al-I'lam & Shar'h Al-Manar].
c -- Rejecting the Hadith that introduces a decree that adds to a rule in the Quran. They claim that since the Sunnah does not perform Naskh (replacing or overruling) over the Quran, then this Hadith must not be accepted. If we accept it, they claimed, then this will constitute a Naskh!! [Shar'h Al-Manar & Al-I'hkam].
d -- They claimed that when a general rule is opposed by a specific rule, then the specific rule is overruled. Therefore, they claimed that general rules of the Quran cannot be restricted by Ahad Hadiths [Shar'h Al-Manar & Irshad Al-Fu'hul].
e -- They accepted the way people of Al-Madinah conducted their religion as dominant over the correct Hadith!!

Third: Taqleed (following a certain Mathhab in all matters of religion) and accepting it as a Mathhab (path) and religion.

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